

BLOOD PRESSURE MEASUREMENT

Proper technique is essential in accurate blood pressure measurement. Use the following to insure you get the best measurement possible and learn how each factor can affect your blood pressure reading

SIT QUIETLY FOR 5 MINUTES

Sitting quietly for a short period of time can aide in bringing blood pressure to a more consistent state.

DON'T DRINK CAFFEINE, ALCOHOL OR SMOKE 30 MINUTES PRIOR TO TAKING BLOOD PRESSURE

These items are vasoconstrictive. This means they may increase blood pressure.

SIT UP STRAIGHT WITH BOTH FEET FLAT ON THE FLOOR

Crossing legs can increase blood pressure.
Slouching may elevate both systolic and diastolic levels.

DO NOT TAKE BLOOD PRESSURE OVER CLOTHING.

USING THE PROPER CUFF SIZE, WRAP CUFF SNUGLY AROUND UPPER ARM AREA, ONE INCH ABOVE NATURAL CREASE.

The bladder of a loosely wrapped cuff will balloon and decrease the effective width causing an elevated reading. Taking blood pressure over clothing may also give you a falsely high reading. Be sure to use the right arm every time you take a blood pressure unless otherwise indicated.

MAKE CERTAIN UPPER ARM IS AT HEART LEVEL WITH ELBOW SLIGHTLY FLEXED, PALM FACING UPWARDS ON A FLAT SURFACE WITH ARM SUPPORTED

If the arm is lower or higher than heart level,
blood pressure could fluctuate as much as 10mmHg

INFLATE CUFF

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF OTHER FACTORS THAT CAN INFLUENCE BLOOD PRESSURE. EACH OF THESE FACTORS CAN HAVE SIGNIFICANT AFFECT ON BLOOD PRESSURE READING.

TALKING

COLD EXPOSURE

BOWEL/BLADDER DISTENTION

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

STRESS

CERTAIN MEDICATIONS

EXPOSURE TO HIGH ALTITUDE

TIME SINCE LAST MEAL



Sources: American Heart Association and the Joint National Committee's Seventh Report on High Blood Pressure